



Supervisor

Mark Ridley-Thomas

Los Angeles County Second District

<http://Ridley-Thomas.LACounty.Gov>

Slauson

from

Angeles Vista to La Brea

Presented

October 4, 2011



Context



The Slauson Avenue corridor from Angeles Vista Boulevard to La Brea Avenue is a . . .

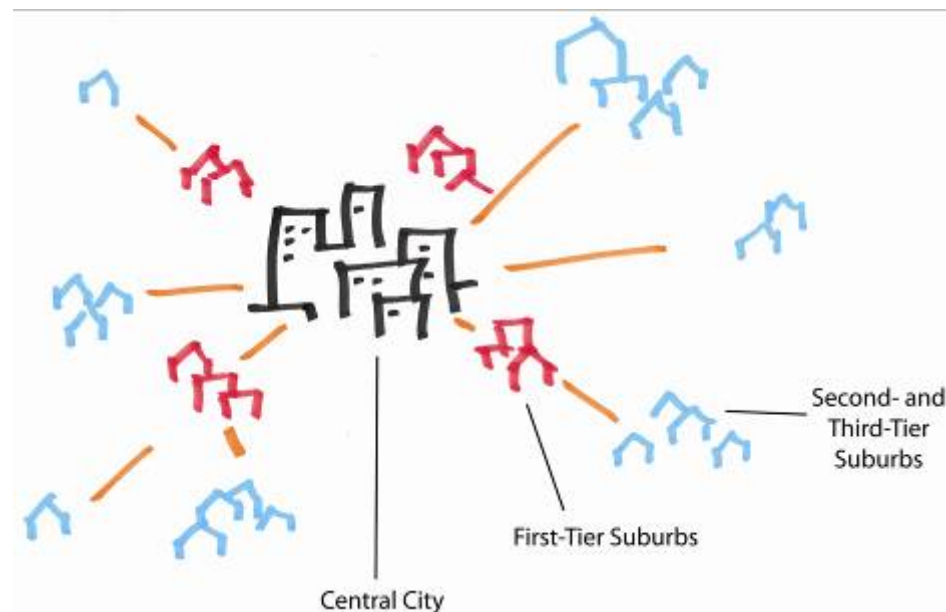
- Traditional “First Tier” suburban commercial center
- With potential to become a new community Town Center

First Tier Suburbs



What is a First-Tier Suburb?

- It is a close-in neighborhood
- It is older, with older housing and retail stock
- It has seen new investment move beyond, to the 'suburban fringe,' often leaving economic challenges in its wake



First Tier Suburbs



Inglewood is a First-Tier Suburb; so are Culver City and Hawthorne. All are involved with revitalization.

On a smaller scale, the commercial “strip” along Slauson between Angeles Vista and La Brea is an example of older commercial growth, which could benefit from a revitalization strategy.



First Tier Suburbs



First-Tier Suburbs have certain innate advantages . . .

- They are close to the civic and economic center of the city
- They often have attractive, older housing stock
- They have established retail districts, often with distinctive architecture
- They often have good transit service
- They may have an established community 'culture'

These advantages can make First-Tier Suburbs attractive to younger families and individuals in search of affordable and attractive housing, shorter commutes and a sense of community. (These positive qualities may not be available in Second and Third-Tier Suburbs).

First Tier Suburbs



Because new investment has often passed them by, First-Tier Suburbs may be at a crossroads . . .

- Their economic prospects will either get worse, or they will get better
- Government policy and public investments can influence this choice of direction



Accordingly, we present this Town Center strategy as an option for the Slauson corridor.



Goals



A Town Center strategy has three key goals . . .

- Identify and define the unique identity of the neighborhood
- Develop a common social and political culture—a 'sense of community' for the neighborhood
- Create a safe and attractive physical place—a 'Town Center'—including a mix of private and public buildings and spaces that will express the unique characteristics and ambitions of the community

Method



Five steps start the process . . .

- Identify communities which have common social and economic interests
- Engage in an ongoing dialogue, including extensive community meetings with residents and businesses, to define the unique characteristics of the community (including topography, history, cultural assets, economy and community aspirations)
- Locate the '100% corner' location at the heart of the community
- Concentrate multiple public resources to create a Town Center at that location, including both physical improvements and services
- Encourage private investments to continue momentum in developing the Town Center



Urban Form

What is a Town Center?

A Town Center is a public place that defines a town or community.

Grand civic buildings alone, do not, make a 'public place' or a 'town center' . . .



Parthenon, Athens

Urban Form



Instead, community identity is developed in public spaces, both indoors and outdoors.

In Ancient Greece, the birthplace of Western democracy, the 'town center' was an open lot at the base of the Acropolis, not the monumental buildings on top of the hill . . .



Pnyx, Athens



Urban Form

A combination of symbolic buildings and public spaces has been used throughout history to define community identity.

Here is an example of a symbolic public building in medieval Florence, Italy, located adjacent to a successful outdoor public gathering place. The building and, even more, the piazza, define the community of Florence . . .



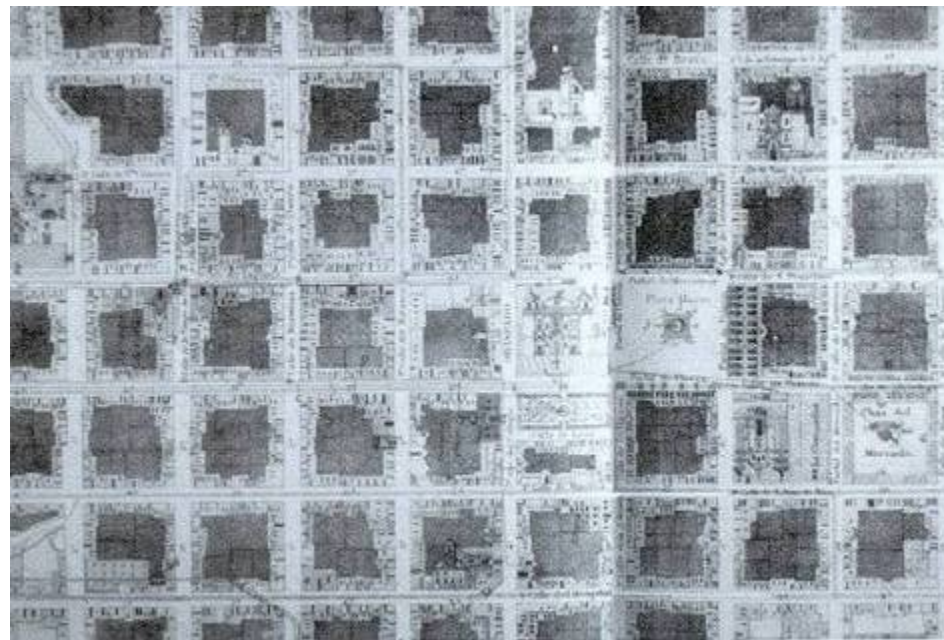
Piazza Signoria , Florence



Urban Form

Town Centers are a global model, found in cultures around the world. They often include civic, retail and residential buildings surrounding a town square.

Here is a classic Latin American example, with a cathedral and city hall facing a central public square . . .

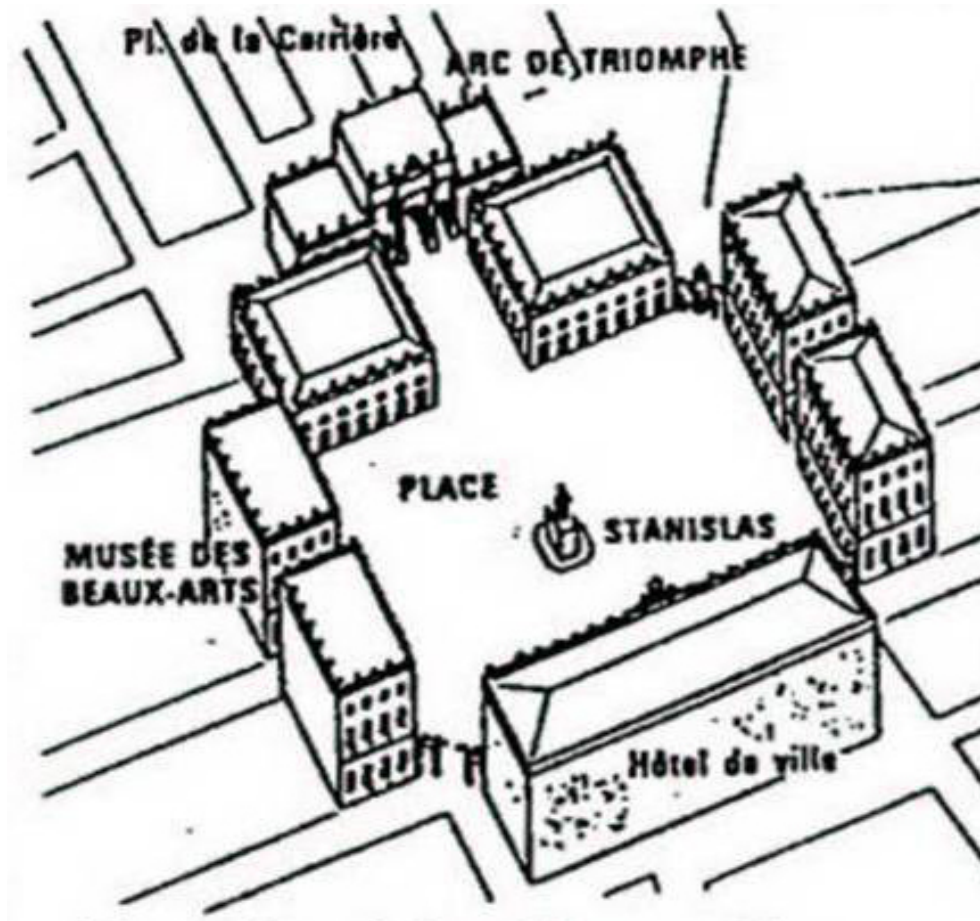


Oaxaca, Mexico

Urban Form



The buildings and spaces can be very simple, as in this late Renaissance example from France . . .



Place Stanislas, Nancy, France

Urban Form



Or proudly ornate, such as this Courthouse in Santa Barbara, California . . .



Old Courthouse, Santa Barbara

Urban Form



Retail and commercial activity, particularly food markets, are important parts of a Town Center . . .



Grand Central Market, Los Angeles

Urban Form



And, of course, housing and transit connections which help create a 'round-the-clock' or '24/7' community . . .



Del Mar Station, Pasadena

Urban Form



But it is the gathering of people that matters most . . .



Reichstag, Berlin



Town Centers

Examples of successful Town Center developments exist in First-Tier Suburbs across America . . .



Valencia, California



San Jose, California



Arlington, Virginia

Town Centers



Lafayette, Louisiana



Gainesville, Florida



Southlake, Texas



Columbus, Ohio

Town Center Strategy: Building Blocks



A Town Center should typically have the following features . . .

- Public gathering places, both indoors and outdoors
- Public buildings, such as town halls, community rooms, senior centers and libraries
- Food stores, restaurants and other retail uses
- Housing
- Transportation connections

Town Center Strategy: Unique Features



At the same time, each Town Center is unique, with unique features . . .

- Topography
- History
- Community
- Economic opportunities

Town Center Strategy



A successful Town Center strategy, therefore, merges these two groups of ingredients . . .

- Social and economic building blocks, with
- Unique community features



Town Center Strategy

The Slauson Corridor from Angeles Vista to La Brea has certain key advantages . . .

- Strong residential demographics
- A cross-roads location, on a hill
- Recognized “destination” restaurants
- Village-scaled existing commercial buildings
- Energized community leadership



Town Center Strategy

But the corridor also has some disadvantages . . .

- Older building stock
- Narrow sidewalks
- Wide streets, and fast automobile traffic
- Two public jurisdictions: City and County

Town Center Strategy



There is much that the County of Los Angeles can do, by concentrating its resources at a single, central location, and making that location a community-based Town Center.

In the Second District of Los Angeles County, there are multiple public resources that are available . . .

	ATHENS	EAST RANCHO DOMINGUEZ	FLORENCE FIRESTONE	LENNOX	WILLOWBROOK	SLAUSON	DEL AIRE	EL CAMINO VILLAGE	RANCHO DOMINGUEZ	WEST CARSON	WISEBURN
Community Identity (Name and "Brand")											
Community Plan											
Redevelopment Area											
Rail Transit											
Bus Transit											
Local Shuttle Service											
Bicycle and Pedestrian Network											
Sidewalks and Streetscape											
Street Signs											
Monument Signs											
Façade Improvements											
Public Parks											
Public Gathering Place											
Public Art (Iconic Place-Making)											
Local Government Center											
Public Library											
Bars and Restaurants											
Retail Anchors											
Small Shop Retail District											
Mixed-Income Housing											
CDBG Investments											
Community Garden											
Farmers' Market											
Town Council											

Complete
Under Development
Planned
Ongoing



Town Center Strategy

For the Slauson Corridor between Angeles Vista and La Brea, we propose to develop a unique Town Center strategy that may include . . .

- Definition of a neighborhood identity and commercial village “name”
- New public buildings
- Sidewalk and streetscape improvements, including lampposts, landscaping, street furniture, signage and crosswalks
- Commercial building redevelopment
- Access pathways to surrounding residential areas
- Commercial business parking
- Expansion of retail and restaurant offerings
- Region-wide “branding” and marketing



Town Center Strategy

This presentation is the first step in creating a Town Center strategy for the corridor.

As the process moves forward, it will involve extensive community participation and support from several public agencies . . .

- Office of County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
- Community Development Commission of the County of Los Angeles
- Los Angeles County Department of Public Works
- Los Angeles County Department Regional Planning
- Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation
- Los Angeles Sheriffs Department
- City of Los Angeles

Los Angeles County • Second District



Office of Supervisor

Mark Ridley-Thomas

